REMARKS

Claims 1-10, 12-16 and 18-26 are pending. Claim 11 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer. Claims 1, 12 and 18 have been amended. No new matter is presented.

Claim 18 was objected to because it depended from a canceled claim. Claim 18 has been amended to depend from claim 16, which is still pending. Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 11-15 were rejected under 35 USC 102(e) as being anticipated by Hikita (U.S. Patent No. 6,271,938). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 11 has been canceled without prejudice or disclaimer.

According to claim 12, each of the image readers, the image forming apparatuses and the image correction device are discrete apparatuses connected via a network. In contrast, Hikita discloses a personal computer 106 equipped with a color laser interface card 110. The interface card 110 couples the personal computer 106 to a scanner 102 and to a printer 101. This image processing device is actually a multi-function peripheral. The components that make up the device of Hikita are not discrete apparatuses connected over a network. Nothing in Hikita discloses or suggests that the peripheral devices are networked. In fact, the color laser interface card couples the personal computer to the scanner and the printer. This actually teaches away from networking these devices since there is no need to network the devices that are connected via an interface card. Applicant respectfully suggests that Hikita does not teach or suggest the

features of claim 12. Claims 13-15 are allowable at least due to their dependency from claim 12. Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claims 1-6, 10, 16, 18, 21 and 22 were rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichikawa in view of Hikita. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

The Examiner admits that Ichikawa does not teach outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus, since the image data is corrected at the printer 12. However, the Examiner maintains that it would have been obvious in view of Hikita to modify Ichikawa by providing means for processing image data before transferring the image data to the image outputting means "so that the image processing corrections disclosed in Ichikawa may be performed even where a printer does not have the capability to perform such corrections. Applicants respectfully disagree.

Ichikawa discloses a device in which image correction is carried out by the printer. As disclosed in Ichikawa, the control unit 13 communicates with the printer 12 through the I/F 20. The control unit captures information about the printer type from the printer. Thereafter, a "combination" of a type of electronic camera and a type of printer is determined. The user then sets the printing conditions. Based on these set printing conditions, correction table data, which corresponds to the printer-camera combination already determined, are sent to the printer (see col. 9, line 48 through col. 10, line 11). The printer stores the correction table data into memory. This correction table data is used ***by the printer*** to correct the image, which is then printed by the printer. If the printer were unable to correct the image data, the device of Ichikawa would not

function. There is no structure provided in Ichikawa to correct the image data by any other means besides the printer. The Examiner has failed to point out any specific evidence of motivation within Ichikawa to modify Ichikawa in light of the teachings of Hikita. There would simply be no need to correct the data in another manner since the purpose of the device in Ichikawa is to correct the data at the printer using the correction table data. Again, if the printer fails to correct the data, there is no suggestion in Ichikawa and no structure disclosed in Ichikawa which would provide a motivation to change the way the image data is corrected. Changing the way the image data is corrected means completely changing the way the device of Ichikawa operates. Further, nothing in either of these references suggests a device which corrects image data in a printer and then switches to correcting the image data before it is sent to the printer in case the printer cannot correct the image data. Either the data is corrected before it is sent to the printer or it is corrected at the printer, and neither reference teaches employing both methods alternatively. Therefore, the features of claim 1 are neither taught nor suggested by Ichikawa, Hikita or a combination thereof.

Claim 16 is allowable for the same reasons claim 1 is allowable. Claim 21 also recites "outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus" and is allowable for the same reasons claim 1 is allowable. The remaining rejected claims are allowable at least due to their respective dependencies. Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Claim 26 was rejected under 35 USC 103(a) as being unpatentable over Ichikawa in view of Hikita and further in view of Falk (U.S. Patent No. 5,760,913). This rejection is respectfully

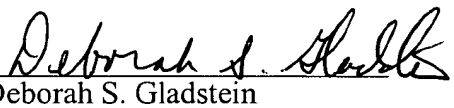
traversed. Claim 26 is allowable at least due to its dependency from claim 1. Applicant requests that this rejection be withdrawn.

Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made by this amendment, captioned "**Version with markings to show changes made**".

In the event that the transmittal letter is separated from this document and the Patent and Trademark Office determines that an extension and/or other relief is required, applicant petitions for any required relief including extensions of time and authorizes the Commissioner to charge the cost of such petitions and/or other fees due in connection with the filing of this document to **Deposit Account No. 03-1952** referencing 325772007400.

Dated: January 21, 2003

Respectfully submitted,

By: 

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE

IN THE CLAIMS:

Amend claims 1, 12 and 18 as follows:

1. (Amended) An image correction device for use in an image forming system which is connectable to a plurality of image readers and a plurality of image forming apparatuses, the image correction device comprising:

a discriminating device for discriminating an image reader and an image forming apparatus which are connected to the image correction device;

memory means for storing correction data relating to combinations of the image reader and image forming apparatus; and

data correction means for correcting image data output from an image reader using the correction data relating to a specific combination of image reader and image forming apparatus and for outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus.

12. (Amended) An image forming system comprising: [connected to a network of]

a plurality of image readers; [and]

a plurality of image forming apparatuses; and [, comprising]

an image correction device which is connected to the plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses over a network for handling image correction for the

whole network of the plurality of image readers and the plurality of image forming apparatuses, said image correction device including:

a discriminating device for discriminating the plurality of image readers from the plurality of image forming apparatuses which are connected to the image correction device,

a memory for storing correction data relating to combinations of the image readers and image forming apparatuses, and

data correction means for correcting image data output from an image reader using the correction data relating to a specific combination of image reader and image forming apparatus and for outputting the corrected data to an image forming apparatus.

18. (Amended) The storage medium for storing program software of claim 16 [17], wherein the data correction control program further includes a program for correcting the image data from the image reader based on updated correction data.